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Guerrilla Warfare: The Cities' New Trial

Police Embattled as Militants Demand Change

By Robert C. Maynard
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At a Chicago housing project, two white policemen whose mission was making friends with young blacks were crossing a soft-ball field when two rifle shots rang out. The policemen fell, mortally wounded, and when comrades arrived to recover the bodies they were pinned down by the sharpshooters' fire.

In a restless Houston slum, the leader of a Black Panther-style group was crossing a street where five white policemen on a church roof were watching for snipers. Two quick shots by the police and the black man was dead, his companion wounded.

These midsummer episodes, and many others, are grim evidence that the racial tension long afflicting America's cities is erupting

in a new and more virulent strain—guerrilla warfare between young blacks and the police.

In contrast to the wholesale ghetto-burnings of the '60s, today's eruptions occur in a confined sphere—around a precinct station, perhaps, or a black storefront. But they are far more lethal, for there is a mutual hatred now, and a greater willingness on both sides to use guns.

"What appears to be happening is a war, a feud between the white police and residents of the black community," remarks Dr. John P. Spiegel of the Lemberg Center on the Study of Violence. "Neither side seems willing to negotiate."

"These kids have to go their route now, because my generation tried and we failed," says Timothy Holland, a black sociologist in New Bedford, Mass. His 15-

year-old daughter was wounded when, during a summer disorder there, a shotgun was fired from a carload of whites, killing a black youth. (Four white youths have been charged with the murder.)

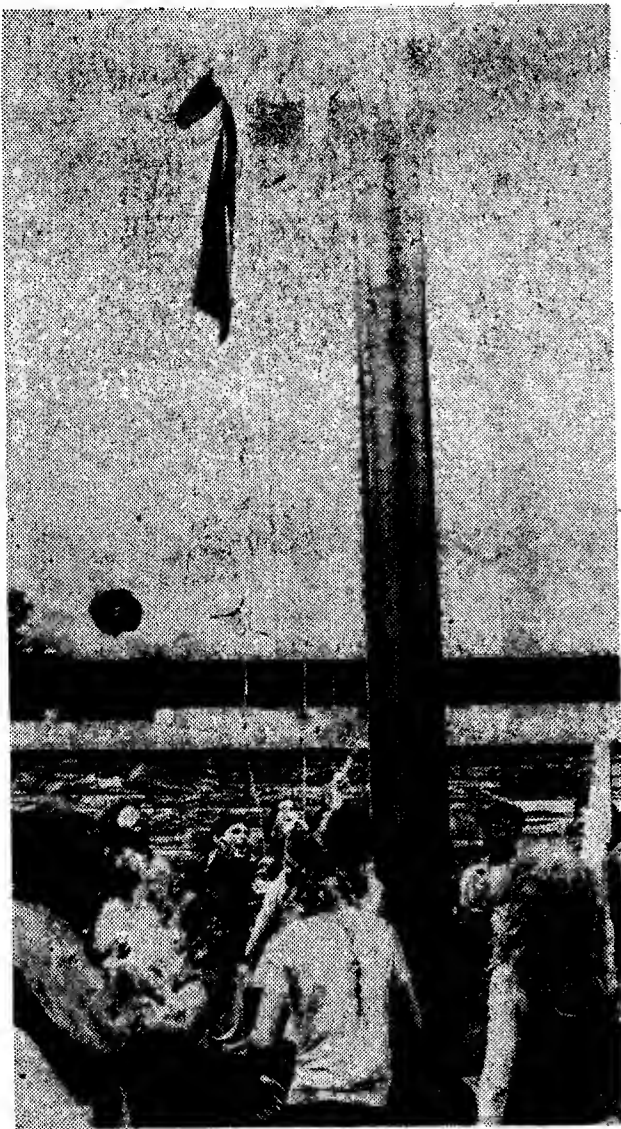
"We said we could make the system work and it failed us and failed our children," Holland says. "So now they are doing it their way."

As viewed by many young blacks, the "system" of institutionalized racism continues to withhold the things they want—education, jobs, housing, equal justice, equal income, a black identity. This system, having resisted the attempts of black parents for change from within, must now—in the view of young blacks—be overthrown from without. And the police are the system's guardians.

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A Chicago policeman watches for snipers



Associated Press

A limp "liberation" flag is raised at Temple University in Philadelphia just before the Black Panthers' convention is opened for three days there.

Kill Authorities, Panthers Are Urged

PANTHERS, From A1

Moreover, leaders of the business community have put public and private pressure on local politicians who had toyed with the idea of canceling the convention.

Downtown Philadelphia was virtually deserted on this holiday weekend and most of the heat is coming from Temple University's McGonigle Hall.

The keynote speaker was Michael Tabor, 23, of New York, a slim and strident figure in black leather jacket and black trousers. He is one of 21 Panthers awaiting trial on charges of conspiring to blow up New York department stores, police stations and railway works.

In a nonstop, 2¼-hour address, Tabor urged that "everyone dedicate himself to the proposition that the only good pig is a dead pig."

"Pig" in Panther parlance usually means "policeman" but today Tabor appeared to extend it to any representative of authority.

America, he said, has left people with this choice: "You will endorse racism and capitalism or you will pick up a gun and get what's yours."

Tabor insisted that the Panthers and their allies will "conduct the revolution anyway we want." Its opponents, he said, "are not human beings, they are not people, they have forfeited

all claims to being a member of the human race... anything the people do to gain their freedom is justified."

Tabor talked of going up on a rooftop after dark with a rifle, training the sights and squeezing the trigger. He did not specify the proposed target but seemed to indicate a policeman.

Such an event, he said, is "self defense. If you don't get him, he's going to get you the next day." A school dropout at 14 and a heroin addict for five years until he joined the Panthers, Tabor drew on an image from his own past. The Rockefellers, Fords, Mellons and Pews, he said, are addicts too. "Their addiction is money," he said. "An injection will cure them—from the end of a barrel of a gun."

Tabor described the United States government as a "government of the pigs, by the pigs and for the

vigs." In contrast, he said. Mao Tse-tung "can do no wrong because 700 million Chinese have guns."

The crowd that filled the 4,100-seat auditorium and spilled onto the floor frequently interrupted Tabor with enthusiastic applause and the ritual cries of "All power to the people... right on."

Perhaps three-fourths of those attending were black and the vast majority appeared under 30.

Tabor's speech seems to mark a new and harsher tone for Panthers. In the past, they have insisted that they kept guns only to defend themselves against police attacks like the raids on their three offices here last Monday. Today, Tabor endorsed aggressive guerilla war.

After the speech, those delegates with the stamina attended workshops of students, workers, women, male homosexuals, lesbians, Third World Peoples and others the Panthers considered exploited.

By Monday, these groups expect to prepare their "vision of the new society." On Nov. 4, election day, the Panthers and their friends intend to work all this up into a new constitution for the United States.

Apart from the sizzling rhetoric, the convention is noteworthy for two other features: It represents a Panther effort to broaden the organization's base and reach out to other groups who believe themselves exploited. It is also an effort to write a manifesto that more clearly defines Panther goals.